

Ramona Airport Project Underway

Earthmovers are leveling ground, a giant crusher is making gravel out of boulders and flagged markers are everywhere. Construction on runway and taxiway improvements at Ramona Airport is underway after years of anticipation.

“We’ve been planning this work since 1983,” said Airports Director Rick Jenkins. “We’ve overcome some major hurdles to get where we are today.”

Jenkins knows the hurdles well and has the scraped knees to prove it. He managed Ramona during the planning and environmental review process. Issues such as vernal pools and the discovery of endangered species delayed much needed improvements such as a larger runway and better taxiway.

“Those issues were dealt with appropriately,” Jenkins said. “We’re moving forward on an important project.”

Extension of the runway 1,000 feet allows larger fire fighting aircraft to take off with heavier loads. Ramona is home to the California Department of Forestry (CDF) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) aerial fire attack base, the busiest such facility in the nation. USFS plans to convert its aging fleet of DC-4 fire bombers to much larger C-130 Hercules aircraft and those planes need a longer runway, Jenkins said.

Current Ramona Airport Manager Richard Selinger has seen the project come to fruition over the last two years. He has high praise for pilots and businesses at the airport.

“They’ve been extremely cooperative and supportive of our efforts,” he said. “Construction causes inconvenience, but people here are understanding and tell me they look forward to a better airport.”

Included in the \$5 million project are runway and taxiway extension and resurfacing, a new run-up area at the east end of the taxiway, a new compass rose, realignment of the south taxiway and drainage improvements. Work is scheduled for completion in May.

Other improvements planned for Ramona include a new sewer line and traffic control tower.



Earthmovers level ground for runway extension at Ramona Airport.

Airport Headquarters Moves Back to Gillespie Field

By Jessica Eslinger, Staff Writer

Bags were packed, boxes stuffed and moving trucks loaded for the big move in early January. Airports headquarters was on its way back to Gillespie Field after two years in Kearny Mesa. The move was part of an initiative to reduce costs by relocating several sections of the San Diego County Department of Public Works. Rick Jenkins, Airports director, looked forward to the move.

“From a customer service perspective, moving back to Gillespie is great because it brings us closer to airport users,” says Jenkins. “It’s also much more efficient operationally to have all our staff at the same location.”

Seven people relocated to Gillespie Field and staff filled two large moving trucks with documents and office furniture.

Gillespie Field served as Airports headquarters for over a decade. Then in 1999, staff relocated to Kearny Mesa due to a shift in management responsibilities.

Headquarters is now at the Gillespie Field Administrative Building, 1960 Joe Crosson Drive in El Cajon. Their new phone number is 619-956-4800.

New Palomar Parking Entrance Avoids Vehicle Search

By Jessica Eslinger, Staff Writer

Travelers to Palomar Airport can now enter hassle-free by using a new parking entrance for the short-term lot. After September 11, national security measures heightened, forcing the Federal Aviation Administration to require a thorough search of all vehicles within 300 feet of an airport terminal. The original entrance to the short-term lot fell within that distance, so every car entering the area was checked. This increased traffic congestion and inconvenienced travelers, especially during peak traveling times.

The new driveway is farther back so drivers using it are no longer within the search zone. They can then park in the back or take one of the 20 spots within the zone, where a search is still required.

“Generally, the public seems pleased and accepting of the heightened security, but they were frustrated with wait times at the entrance gate,” said Kris Dore, assistant airport manager. “Now, travelers can bypass these measures and save time.”

Palomar also has a long-term parking lot, which hasn’t changed and remains open for travelers who are gone for more than 14 days.



Construction of the driveway took several weeks and was completed before Christmas. The new entrance is located on the east side of the short-term lot, before the road bends at the original entrance. Drivers can still use the old driveway, which is closer to the terminal, or they can take the new, faster route.

Palomar Airport is one of eight County airports and is the busiest in the county.

New entrance to short-term parking area means no vehicle search for users.

Destination San Diego—

Captain Fred Province: Pilot, Producer, Performer

By Jessica Eslinger Staff Writer

On the north edge of Gillespie Field, near the San Diego Aerospace Museum Annex, Fred Province does what he loves; working on his plane and preparing for next month’s episode of “Captain Fred’s Aviation Theater.”

His is no typical airplane hangar; the walls are decorated from ceiling to floor with awards, airplane models and magazines, cartoon images, autographed celebrity pictures and family photos. A couch sits just beneath the airplane, and by the entrance are a barbecue, microwave, tables and several chairs. It’s more a party location than a plane shed.

“Aviation is a small family; everybody knows each other,” said Province. Province, himself, seems to have befriended everyone at Gillespie Field, including fellow pilots and many prominent San Diegans.

As a pilot and public access television show producer, he is very happy with where he’s ended up and is doing everything he can to give back to the community he loves. But he hasn’t always had such luxuries.

Province was born in a small mining town in Missouri. His family was “dirt poor,” but even then he was fascinated with flying. At 14, he built his own life-size glider from scrap lumber and JC Penny drapery lining. Concerned neighbors reported this new fabrication to the local sheriff who, for safety purposes, burnt the tail end of the plane to prevent any attempt at flying. Although upset, Province was not deterred from his love for aviation.

After high school, Province worked in the lead mines until, at nineteen, he was drafted for the Korean War; a temporary move that he says changed his life. When he returned home, he used his veteran’s benefits to pay for tuition at the University of Missouri and help him earn a Bachelor’s Degree in education. Province then worked as a teacher, coach and principal before moving to San Diego in 1963.

He earned five teaching credentials in Missouri and California and went on to receive a Master’s Degree in education from the University of California in Sacramento. While completing graduate work at San Diego State University, he met his wife, Ana, and they have been sharing the joys of flying ever since.

Together, they write and produce “Captain Fred’s Aviation Theater,” a public access television program that airs locally on Cox Cable (Channel 23) and Time Warner Cable (Channel 19), Sunday nights at seven.

“I’ll never be an ace and I don’t have a lot of money to donate,” said Province, “So my show is my contribution to aviation and the preservation of the San Diego Aerospace Museum.”

He said his colleagues think the show is better than a monetary donation because it’s educational and gives credit where it’s deserved. This 13-year-old program, sponsored by the Aerospace Museum, highlights San Diego planes, pilots and aviation history. It has won three gold medals for excellence in public access television.



Captain Fred Province with airplane in his Gillespie Field hangar/studio.

Compass Points

By Rick Jenkins, Airports Director

During the winter flying months it seems appropriate to talk about aviation safety. In response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, and the threat of more in the future, County Airports recently made significant enhancements to security at our airports.

Immediately following the attacks, we shut down all our airports along with others nationwide. We took a thorough look at our security posture and immediately instituted measures to enhance security. Since then, we have evaluated these measures, fine tuned them and are looking at long term measures that will further enhance security.

Many of these measures involve a concentrated effort to ensure pedestrians, vehicles and equipment do not encroach on runways and taxiways. This is also the goal of the runway incursion prevention program. As you are probably aware, the program is a very high priority in the FAA. It is also one of our highest priorities in County Airports. The reason is simple—a successful program saves lives.

Airport service roads are a very effective way to reduce the potential for runway incursions. They provide alternate routes for service vehicles other than runways and taxiways. Therefore, one of our goals at County Airports is to develop service roads at our airports where possible.

Adequate fencing, gates and signage also help reduce runway incursions as well as enhancing security. Since September 11 we have made major improvements to our fencing and gates. Several FBO's have also taken action to improve their fencing and gates. We're in much better shape than we were before, but we still have work to do in this regard.

A successful runway incursion prevention program also includes education and the active participation of all involved parties including airport users, airport staff, FAA personnel and others. The Runway Safety Program Manager for the FAA, Western-Pacific Region has visited our airports several times recently to look at our program and share information and ideas with airport staff as well as many airport users. Guidance provided by his office has enhanced our program.

I'm sure many of you have innovative ideas to enhance our security posture and help us operate our airports as safely as possible. I encourage you to share those ideas with airport staff.

Wishing you all a safe new year.

Sunbreak, SCAN Classes Offered at Gillespie

By Mike Carson, SEE Operations

Operation Sunbreak and SCAN classes are available at Gillespie Field (SEE). Each is taught by a certified air traffic controller.

SCAN (Search, Call, Acknowledge & Notice) is a safety program for drivers accessing Gillespie Field's aircraft maneuvering and operations areas. It's a required aviation safety training program that must be taken before entering and exiting all aircraft areas in any type of vehicle. Among topics covered are use of radio control clearance from the air traffic control tower, airport runway and taxiway signage, runway incursion program and asphalt markings. Classes are the second Monday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in the SEE administration building lobby.

Classes for Operation Sunbreak are held the first Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the SEE administration building lobby. The class covers San Diego airspace, local procedures, general tower operations and positions, and general flying information. The class is coordinated with San Diego Flight Standard District Office's (FSDO) "Wing" program.

The FAA/FSDO Pilot Safety Seminar Programs are held the third Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. in the SEE administration building lobby.

Vasquez Named Fallbrook Assistant Manager

Willie Vasquez is the new assistant manager for Fallbrook Airpark. No stranger to San Diego County Airports, Vasquez was previously head of maintenance.

"I'm very happy to be here," he said. "There are many challenges to face and I will enjoy working with the people of this community."

Vasquez will report to Richard Selinger who is manager for Fallbrook, Ramona and Borrego Valley airports.



Sky's the Limit for Challenge Air Kids & Friends

Combine 19 pilots and 77 specially challenged children and young adults and you have a recipe for success. That's the case of Challenge Air for Kids and Friends event at Gillespie Field in November.

Free plane rides were the highlight of the day, along with a brief ground school where participants learned about forces of flight and how physically challenged pilots fly with specially equipped airplanes. Also taking part were 78 siblings and friends of the disabled and seriously ill San Diego area young people and 46 adults.

"This was fantastic work," said Byron Lazlo, event coordinator. "Our pilots flew 81 flights throughout the day."

Hosted by Allen Airways Flying Museum, the event was also sponsored by Southwest Airlines, Ronald McDonald House Charities of San Diego, BF Goodrich Employees and others.

Established in 1993, Challenge Air for Kids and Friends has inspired more than 12,000 physically challenged children in 21 states.

Gillespie ALP Underway

Work on updating Gillespie Field's Airport Layout Plan (ALP) is underway. P&D Aviation Consultants is working with airport users, neighbors, various agencies and others to determine what the facility will be in the future.

ALPs are maps of what an airport looks like at present and what is planned to change over the next several years. P&D is working with an Advisory Committee to develop the plan. A narrative document is part of the plan that describes in detail what changes are planned.

Estimated completion is Fall 2002.

Guard Remains at Palomar

Guardsman keeps watch at Palomar Airport. Air National Guard troops will remain on duty at Palomar Airport through April.



Tail Section

***David Turosak** is a new associate real property agent. His background is in commercial real estate appraising. He will handle leases at Gillespie Field, Palomar and Fallbrook...Woman Pilot Magazine named **Ana Province** "Aviation Ambassador U.S.A." for her long term contributions and inspirations...**Olivier Brackett** is on board Airports staff working with security issues for all eight County airports.*